



Crux Aetatis

And Other Poems

MARTIN SCHUTZE



Class PS 3537

Book 27 Ct

1904

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And Other Poems

MARTIN SCHUTZE

Boston : Richard G. Badger

The Gorham Press

1904

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DEU 27 1004
GODST 1004 2004
Apr. 10, 1004
CLASS a REG. NO.
84829
1004 2004

Printed at
The Gorham Press
Boston, U. S. A.

To E. W. S.



Contents

I. Crux Aetatis	7
II. Aetas et Aeternitas. Five Sonnets	8
“Through the Sober Window”	13
Isolde. Three Sonnets	14
Monochord	17
“Again Your Eye”	18
Silver-Gray	20
Interface	22
The Three Moons	23
1. Faerie	23
2. Aspiration	24
3. Echoes	26
Autumn Gypsy	27
The Double	32
Gloom Folk	33
Winter Sabbath	34
By the Great Lake in Winter	35
Continuity	36
Threescore Ten	37
Evening	38
The Gale	40
Day-After-Day	42
In October Woods	43
The Singer	44
Song	45
Vibrations	46
Christmas Eve	48

Fall Exuberance	.	.	.	.	.	49
Vapors	.	.	.	.	.	50
The Tree	.	.	.	.	.	51
The Turn of the Wheel	.	.	.	.	.	52
“I Saw a Russian Thistle Ball”	.	.	.	.	.	53
“Precious Stones I Found by the Sea”	.	.	.	.	.	54

I Crux Aetatis

I had a vision of a smouldering plain,
A thousand blackened stacks were belching wide
A twisting coil of smoke on every side
Which crawled along the murky sky. The bane
Of black death seemed to have fall'n. I looked
again,
And many blackened roofs I dimly spied.
Deep-sunken in the smoke, they seemed to hide
Charred heaps of recent ruins which remain
Of towns, by pillage, murder, war laid low.
And ever through the smoke a shadow ran :
A cross, and on it hung the form of Man.
Clamors confused and strident surged below ;
And as they blending rose they were the cry
Of murder : “Crucify Him, crucify !”

II Aetas et Aeternitas

1

Think you that cunning, violence, and crime
Can ever be of Love and Truth the seed?
Think you, the wells of hate and wrath which
feed
Your being, through some alchemy of time
Will turn to sweetness in your fruit? The chime
Of Peace will issue from your voices keyed
To cries of war? Can snow again be freed
From the deep scars of traffic and its grime?

You point to the success and worldly show
Your iron hand has wrought, and call it wise
Because to-morrow's hand can grasp it. Lo,
With all their pomp, a thousand morrows pass,
And still abideth Truth, as bodes the face
Of night beneath the scrawls of fire-flies.

II Aetas et Aeternitas

2

Does not the bolt that smiteth down the tree
Consume the countless grasses which are grown
Around its root? And do the grasses moan
In bitterness of spirit: “What are we
To share the doom thy pride has brought on thee?”
The remnant servants of the Great o’erthrown
Possess their ruins. Do the masters groan:
“Why profit ye by our adversity?”

Why wage ye, brothers, internecine strife?
Rule ye the storm that tramples down the grain,
And fells the tree? Does not the April rain
Melt down the sides of mountains, taking life,
And giving it? Why clamor ye and call
Your brother’s guilt what is the law of all?

II Aetas et Aeternitas

3

. . . For all the speech of Evil is but one.
Whether it leap abrupt from brazen tongue
Of open violence, or tarry long
With blandishments of cunning, or it run
In the smooth cadence by long practice won,
Or meekly drifting with the guilty throng ;
Whether it issue from one leader strong,
Or from a thousand led ; it is but one.

Its theme be glory, or prosperity,
The love of country, wisdom, or the love
Of man, and of the God that is above —
But from the threshold of Eternity
A voice of thunder echoes back the cry
Of murder : “Crucify Him, crucify !”

II Aetas et Aeternitas

4

And all the speech of Goodness is but one.
Whether it come as at the mist-veiled dawn
All timid to the water comes the fawn;
Whether it triumph as the Autumn sun
Over the increase of rich labor done;
Whether it speak as on a summer morn
The night in countless little gleams dew-borne
Speaks to the toiling day; it is but one.

It is a song of gladness and of faith,
Of brotherhood, of steadfast gentleness,
And love that never chideth but to bless,
Nor quakes at cunning, tyranny, nor death;
And from the throne of God comes back the cry
Of blessing: “Sanctify Him, sanctify!”

II Aetas et Aeternitas

5

Night lies on field and woodland as a dream
Of peace and love, so solemn and so still,
When climbs the grade a freight train with the
shril

Voice of some monstrous agony. The steam
Is bursting from a hundred pores. The scream
Of all the bitter travail of the will,
The belching smoke, the crash of steel on steel,
For one brief space of turmoil rule supreme.

And like some spray upflung against the face
Of the new-risen moon, without a trace,
It swiftly vanishes. And closer draw
Again the presences of Earth, and Sky
With all its stars, clothed with the authority
Of the supreme unalterable law.

Through the Sober Window

Through the sober window
The wooded Autumn hillside peers,
Silent in the silver-purple rain-mist,
Dim as golden treasures
That have slept a thousand years
In the deepest depths of the sea.

And a moment we wonder
And breathless gaze
At the buried golden treasures
That have slumbered in dim sea-depths
A thousand years,
Strange as the many-figured curtain
Which folds the ultimate secret of things.

And we turn again
To our cabined ease.
We ripen, and fall, and turn to mould
As the fluttering leaf.
We pass as the blind gray clouds overhead.

And within us, unheeded,
A golden treasure slumbers a thousand years,
Dim as the deepest depths of the sea,
Somber with the secret of things.

Isolde

I

Isolde — is not this the voice that I
Have caught at through the vain imprisoned
years?

Have I not heard it as a dreamer hears
Whispers astir within a mystery
Ambiguous with stubborn gloom and high
Timid desires? Have I not bent my ears
To it through the rout of wont-begotten fears,
And it flashed by me like a wind-spod cry?

What seemed the enduring confines of desire,
Age after prudent age amassing strove,
Like chaff are gone within a breath of fire;
And the majestic shape of ancient Right,
A piteous phantom of a troubled night
Has waned before the morning song of Love.

Isolde

II

Thy voice that came upon the sweeping sea
Of passion-driven sound, as sea-birds dance
Above the leaping crests, now vaults the expanse
Of long-waved passions of Humanity —
The wandering tides of human destiny.
And all the jar and war of words which spans
The world, an iron roof of dissonance,
Melts into this one voice's harmony.

What raged, a brutish tumult of the cries
Of lust, clamor of greed and fervor, sighs
Of aspiration, and the blasts of hate,
Sounds but the broken vowels of one word,
Falters the fragments of one timeless chord,
Love perfect in thy voice transfigurate.

Isolde

III

Truth I beheld, a shimmering island, dim
Within a streaming, hazy veil of sense,
Where all the solemn idols of pretense,
The frowning spectres of historic whim,
Creatures of rote-begotten wisdom, grim
Judges of guilt and makeshift recompense,
Are but cloud-phantoms on the horizon whence
They mutter, gloom, sink 'neath the violet rim —

Where life is as the blowing of the flowers,
A fervent dream; a rapture 'neath the wing
Of the white moth of passion, quivering,
Through purple-eyed desirous twilight hours;
And then — a fragrance passing in the streams
Of mingling Summer-dreams, Midsummer-
dreams . . .

Monochord

When Love

Unsparing, unreserving Love

Meets face to face,

Then, and then only, is the veil withdrawn

That shieldeth soul from soul,

That shields the soul from God.

For terrible,

Unspeakable, devouring is the soul,

If so its eye

Be not the brimming eye of prostrate love ;

For quailing, utterly undone the soul

If so its eye

Be not the eye of unremitting love :

Unsparing is the countenance of God.

Close-drawn the veil,

We walk in darkness and in solitude,

Husband and wife, child, brother, market-fellow.

Ah, will not Love

Cease faintly fingering at the corners,

And with delivering resolute hand

Fling wide the veil

That shroudeth soul from soul,

That shrouds the soul from God.

Again Your Eye

Again your eye
So steady, and so gentle, and so firm,
Rests on me, and again
That even quest,
That even self-transcending search,
Sounds the deep waters of my troubled soul.

And then again I know
The weakness and despair of the First Man
When first he looked into his Maker's eye,
When first he faced the question of the Truth,
When first he quailed, and failed, and hid.

And I am exiled then as you,
And straying in the wastes of solitude
As you.
I call on all the powers of Love,
Upon the deathless ardor of the Spirit,
And nothing answers, save
The tangled echoes of my anguished voice.

All the devices of my love,
All my caresses, all the thoughts and words
Of gentleness that struggle from my soul,
My voiceless passion, all the deeds and dreams
That spring from out the tumult of my striving,
Are but thin vapors burnt to nought
By fires transcendent ;
Are but a mockery and make-believe
That cannot turn the shafts sent true
Into the core of being.

For still within your eyes
There abides unflinching, unescapable,
That even quest, that silent, troubled search,
As broods Eternity
Behind the ceaseless, traceless shift of things.

Silver-Gray

Slowly drift the silver hours,
Shifts the silver sky.

By a season-silvered house,
On a bench, deep in the seeding sward,
An old man and woman drowse,
Round-backed as the haystacks in their yard,
Silent as the hills ;
Slow-eyed, calm, unindividual,
Looking without wonder on the meadows
Rolling silvery by the low gray wall,
Without question on the dizzy glimmer
Of the misty sea of farthest hills.

Trees and bushes float in silver glimmer.
Shreds of vapory hillsides shimmer,
Silver tapestry,
Through a screen of pines,
Shot with sprays of silver spines.

Silently drift vast cloud shadows
Over drowsy hills and woods and meadows ;
Glistening bulks, pass silently
Browsing cattle down the shallow
Gently dipping valley,

All their necks low-slanting as the hills,
All their heads deep-buried in the grass,
Slowly, evenly they pass.

The sun-quicken'd atmospheric simmer,
Insect-voiced, o'er all the grass-sweet ground,
Rifts a moment for the sound
Of the terse and measured cattle-cropping
— Like sea-mist before the ripples dropping
Burst on burst, unhurried on the shore —
Or some wander-bird's fall-tempered measure,
Gathering all the silvery shimmer
In a few swift-flashing drops of sound —
And again the tremulous whirr creeps o'er
The slow-moving hours,
As the silvery blur creeps over the sky.

The old house, the meadows, and their creatures
Melt with the vague, unsubstantial features
Of the hills ;
Overgloomed by a far mountain, brooding,
Like a bovine giant-beast primeval
Couching, in a gap between the hills.

Slowly drift the silver hours,
Shifts the silver sky.

Interface

Through the Summer ball-room window
Rolls the ancient tune of the sea ;
Within, an old waltz is playing
That waves and sways as the sea.

Like a phantom tide, the sea-mist
The heated fragrance drowns ;
The swish of the sea steals into
The ripples of frothy gowns.

Round bushes, huddled and anxious,
As they cling to the hem of the night,
And trees, wind-worn and haggard,
Press close to the circle of light.

They seem forever approaching —
They seem forever to fly —
They seem forever pleading —
They seem forever to spy —

Through the light from within dew-filtered,
Glimmers the starry sky,
Far, and faint, mist-shrouded,
As eyes of memory.

The Three Moons. A Dream

1 FAERIE

In the deep, round lap of a wood-warded vale,
Lay a moon-white pool; a flawless pearl it lay
In yielding slopes soft with mist-bloom of the
 moonlight,
And the woods were ancient palaces in the moon-
 light.
Children with glimmering bodies came playing to
 the pool,
Flickering white flames; and diamond ripples
 came
To play with them; as tinkling silver bells they
 came . . .

I, too, was with the ripples; they were fondling
 and cool
Like a mother's fingers; and the breezes crooned
 a fairy tale
As they stooped low to me from the forest's magic
 shade,
Or fell on the water like swift swallows, to fade
 away
In sudden elfin laughter. Dream-buoyed I lay
Where in blissful whispers round me the ripples
 played . . .

In dead desert ripples I found a memory
Wan as the moon in the midday sky.

II. ASPIRATION

In a daisied meadow circled by dark walls of wood,
In the strength of my youth I stood, and flickering fire-flies
Were as stings of passion to my blood.
Far on over the meadow I saw slowly rise
A figure tall as a white lily, and her face
Was dim and tremulous as the moon in driven mist.
Her hair as flights of swallows. A summons was
her face.
I was drawn as birds by the message that on misty wing
From a distant April the breezes bring. . . .
Strong young breezes ran beside me in the race,
And the daisies were as dancing ripples at my feet. . . .

The daisies were as upturned faces at my feet,
With urging, winning gaze they tempted me to
bide,
They sank with rueful murmur under every pace,
They surged, a pleading host that would not be
denied,
They clung in sinuous embraces to my feet,
They grew till not in vain my throat and lips they
kissed,
They grew till over my eyes they were a billowing
mist,
And the breezes, screaming scourges in my
face. . . .

Impenetrable walls of poppies rose before
My eyes. The breezes slept. I saw the face no
more. . . .

III. ECHOES

I won the wide summit of a wood-girt hill.
Behind me stealthy leaves were falling silently,
Yellow ripples upon Autumn's purple sea
In whose twilight distant gorgeous forests swoon,
Jewelled islands of dream. And over the edge of
the hill
From the pale purple sea had welled the yellow
moon —
Memory's golden heart, it hung quivering over the
hill :
And the children's play, the fairy croon,
The beat of the pace at the start of the race,
The shimmering pool that ebbed so soon,
And the tremors upon a forgotten face —
Came, vibrant echoes, from heights unattain-
able. . . .

Autumn Gypsy

I found her wandering over the hill
One warm October day;
Her feet, sun-glints that swift and still,
O'er waving grasses stray.

A single wind-blown garment torn,
Clung to her slender form,
Gray, purple-shaded, season-worn
By sun, and thorn, and storm.

Her golden tresses were shot with fire
As sun-lit maple trees;
And through them, eyes of deep desire —
Blue sky through golden leaves.

Her head was purple-aster crowned
— Pale wreath of the Autumn dawn —
Her eyes were shaded with twilight round,
As the blue October morn.

We roamed the jewelled morning through
With the cloud-shadows over the downs;
At noon we lay where the sky hung blue,
In thin, gold maple crowns.

Close as noon shadows, leaves were strown,
Golden around each tree;
Ripe and gay, the leaves came down,
Passionate souls set free.

Her songs were as the rustling trees
—Linked echoes of things half said;—
Her hands alive as the grass-sweet breeze
That softly over us sped:

This is the bridal of the Earth,
These, her nuptial bowers,
These are the days of passionate mirth,
These, her golden showers.

With seeds, and leaves, and the wandering sky,
Her ministers are we,
We ripen, beget, and bear, and die,
Yet changeless are as she.

Of the magic knowledge, these the days,
Which youth eternal brings,
When we see the vision of her face
Through the rifting screen of things . . .

Where a brook foamed over a mossy ledge,
Was a rocky, secret pool ;
The trees were a vaulting, golden hedge,
The water was clear and cool.

And naked she rose, as a birch so fair,
Poised on a froth-girt stone,
A golden torrent, her rippling hair
About her shoulders shone.

Amid the falling foam she stood,
In a living bridal veil ;
And then the pool with ripples wooed
Her body, pearly pale.

Her laughter, and speech, and body's grace
Were gleams that flickering sped
Over twining roots, o'er the water's face,
And its ripple-clouded bed . . .

When twilight peered from every dell
With purple-aster eyes,
And the clouds had all gone over the hill,
And the mists began to rise,

A bed I made under balsam trees,
On a needle-scented floor,
Branches and crackling Autumn leaves
For a fragrant fire I bore . . .

The dome of Peace rose slowly and still
Over forest-tiers on tiers,
Over the swinging curve of the hill,
Above the starry spheres . . .

Glimmered her face in the dusk of her hair,
When sleeping she lay by my side,
As the slip of the midnight moon in a lair
Lingers, of boughs spread wide.

When I awoke in the chill gray dawn,
Empty was her bed,
Gold was the hill over which she had gone,
With a last glimpse of her head.

And I have wandered the whole world through,
Seeking her everywhere,
And ever above the hill in the blue
Was a glimpse of her golden hair . . .

I have made a cabin of bark and boughs,
On the slope of a terraced hill;
Below, in the hazy valley, drowse
Towns, contented and still.

The fire is lit on the woodland hearth,
Under balsams by my door;
Again to her bridal comes the Earth
With all her golden store.

And there, just over the brow of the hill
A golden gleam I see —
Where the last light kisses, long and still,
The crown of a maple tree.

The Double

Whence is the stare,
Frozen upon some iron countenance,
Beyond the vacant stare
Of shallow noonday's cloudless desolate glare?

Whence the smile,
Mirage of lands of ever-blown flowers,
Behind the potent smile
On haze-bedizened shore, and sea, and isle?

Whence the voice
That cries against the heavens' resounding dome,
Above the jar and noise
Where men despair, and clamor, and rejoice?

Whence the hush,
Yawning beneath the featureless abyssm
Of shame's and sorrow's hush
That drains all impulse's animant rush?

What is this thing,
Forever present, ever vanishing,
Now burning in the words a stranger says,
Now quailing in a baffled girlish gaze,
Now quick beneath yon boys' wild ways and plays,
—And now entrenched behind its own soul's
laboring?

Gloom-Folk

Their eyes, cold, gloom-lidded,
As the narrow glance of twilight
With the heavy lids of darkness
On the ashen streak of horizon—
 Sightless, bleak, forgetting,
 As falling dusk in November.

Gray flocks of fog, they pasture
In the gray mist-bloom of the valleys
Which the blighting hand of darkness
Has turned to wasted fallows—
 Heartless, blank, forgetting,
 As falling dusk in November.

Their hearts, waste as the fallows;
The mocking glimmer of twilight
In blurring mists, their features;
Their breasts, fog-smothered hollows—
 Blurred, blank, forgetting,
 As falling dusk in November.

Winter Sabbath

My soul has stolen out upon the hoar
And glistening day. A hazy mystery,
It veils the turquoise sky and answering sea,
And ice-emporled and battlemented shore;
It lays a soft concealing mist-hand o'er
The horizon's cruel prison wall where the
Fatuous Vision, mad for liberty,
With tremulous finger fumbles for a door.

And all my world is a vast pearly gleam,
And all my thought an iridescent dream;
The fairy headlands streaming through the mist,
The sudden shadows where the breezes stray,
The lapping water — drifting, shifting play
Within my soul is all I wis and list.

By the Great Lake in Winter

The drowsy hum and whine of the speeding train
Is on the air; a broken dizzy stream,
Flits by the window the dense fleecy steam;
And with it, now concealed, revealed again,
Along the shore a gray fantastic chain
Of huddling shapes, frost-modelled hosts of dream.
Bides, through the rifts, a vast gray passive gleam,
And, purple-gray, the sky glooms o'er the main.

Infinite Presence — there it seems to dwell
Where all things passionate, inscrutable,
Vast and still have left their featurings
Beneath the scrawls of mocking episodes;
And, far beyond the madding whirl of things,
Its face forever bides, and broods, and bodes.

Continuity

Clear and sparkling, falls the water
 into the basin rock-gray, moss-green,
Ever gliding, ever passing,
 ever fixed as the pale-blue sheen
Sent from the blue heart of heaven
 which unaltered, unpassing bides
Through the ebb and flow of seasons,
 through the ages' passionate tides.

Every ripple, mingling swiftly
 with its hurrying fellows, flees
Down the pebbled gleam-flecked channel,
 under the gloom of biding trees,
Fleeting, vanishing, never perishing,
 changeless in ever changing state,
Past things rooted, from secret to secret,
 down the varying channels of Fate.

In dark-rippling robe a woman
 moveless stands by the rushing stream,
With a girl-babe, fair and naked,
 on her bosom like a gleam
Flashing from the breast of darkness ;
 both with wonder agaze in their faces —
And the water flashes, passes,
 ever renewing, flashes, passes.

Threescore-Ten

Murmured blessings of falling snow be on you
Whose undaunted heart, though it lock in silence
Many a wound and forfeited quest of springtime,
Purer than snow is.

Benedictions of sunlit snow be on you,
Flooded with the infinite blue of heaven,
Though your soul's unclouded abyss of calmness
Shames the unfathomed.

Benedictions of waning snow be on you,
Leave eternal splendor of Spring about you
In whose eyes is mirrored the never fading
Glory indwelling.

Evening

We are sitting in clover-fields drowsy with bees,
My sweetheart sees lines, and colors, and glints
That sport with the solemn, paternal trees,
And on tiering hills the sheeted sea tints.
A wilful sky, in sunset carouse
With frothy clouds, just pushes aside
A curtain, gold-fringed, of his many-domed house
On the western hills, for a last misty-eyed
Survey of the smiling, indulgent slopes.
And my thoughts follow the wayward trail
Of the smoke of my pipe, as it winds and gropes
Toward the heights where its cloud-brothers sail.

O'er the dusk-bronzed meadow sways and groans
The last load of hay, and the shouts of its crew
I hear, and my sweetheart's musing tones,
The robin's bubbling comments, too,
And the far-off city's deep-voiced moans
As the day-burden slips from brain and thew.

Veil after veil, the night curtains fall,
Blue on blue; a wan, reminiscent light
On watch by the northern boundary wall,
And the monotone insect voice of night
Try vainly the splendors of day to recall.

My sweetheart and I unwilling depart
Through the crunching stubbles, and silence keep
As we pass under trees whose leaves will start
In the sudden tremors of first light sleep.

The distinctions of hard-eyed day have passed
As we enter our door, and pain and delight
Of our day-thoughts have melted into the vast
Harmonious tenderness of night.

The Gale

The bees hang under the blossoms' lee,
By bonds invisible anchored there;
Birds cling to yonder shuddering tree,
All heading the same way;
The swallows wheel and scream with glee
Mid apple-blossoms whirling gay;
Spindrift comes scudding over the sea
Into your fluttering hair.

In shattering blasts the billows hurl
Their weight upon the staggering quay;
Sheet after sheet, burst, leap, and whirl
The rainbow flames of spray.
The shipping in the seething swirl
Tosses and strains to break away,
In roaring rigging sailors furl
Slapping sails hurriedly.

The crisp and hard-blue waters o'er,
Like blushes on an eager girl,
Cloud-shadows sail. The weltering, far
Horizon jaggedly
Grips the wild sky. Along the shore
The gulls forever untiringly
Now plunge, flash up, now calmly soar
Where white the breakers curl.

O my beloved, cannot we
Amid the passionate uproar
On storm-steep paths of liberty
One care-free journey fare?
Can we not one sun's course be free,
Mid urge and surge of generous dare,
On racing crests of life to be
As billows, birds, and air?
Can we not burst the gates of fear,
Sweep off the bars and crumbling store
And lees of yesterday's wisdom drear,
And miser-prudence?
Our thoughts without expedient veer,
The falter in our voice no more,
Our hearts no usurers, the sheer
Storm-joy within the deep soul's core.

Day-After-Day

O, drive once more from the beaten brain
The grizzled horror of day-after-day;
O, clear from the smothered heart again
The cumulant dregs of day-after-day.

O, paint once more the flying goal
With the rainbow-splendors of April storms;
O, match once more the pursuing soul
With the racing clouds of April storms.

O, wake my pulse with the old spring cry
To the panting pace of the East-ridden sea;
O, fill again the shrunken eye
With the blue-sea vision of Eternity.

O, lift this monster of Now-and-Near,
This incubus of monotonous wants;
The changeless face of the spying Here
That stares in silence, stares and haunts.

In October Woods

All our striving is a fitful flicker
Sun-flecked ground upon,
That a cloud, a wayward migrant chanceling,
Whelms anon.

Our compelling passions, starts of breezes,
Swiftly come and past —
Sea-song drifted through a door sprung open,
Then made fast.

And their fruits are sudden gusts of diamond
Dewdrops mouldward bound :
A few glints in midair, fugient patter
On the ground.

Shoals of red leaves floating on a troubled
Pool, our gorgeous dreams ;
And its banks are marred by roving cattle
Of our schemes.

And our will, self-destined, self-responsive,
Linking deed with deed,
Is a gossamer wind-waif, spanning haply
Weed and weed.

Shingly vistas of our high-roofed cities,
Power and patience-wrought :
Drifted leaves on ground, one season tramples
Into nought.

The Singer

Give me your flowers,
Your tears and applause;
Bid the dumb minutes
For me pause.

What passed twixt rose
And the heart of June
Has linked us awhile
In magic of tune.

Long in darkness
I strove unknown,
Back into darkness
I glide alone.

The rose on your bosom
To-morrow is dead,
Lost is the voice of
The song that is sped.

Only to-day I
May dazzle and reign —
Shower me with plaudits
And roses again.

Song

My love and I in the meadow lie,
In the deep grass hidden so close, so close,
Through whose shadow-sprays the low sun strays,
And, passing, smiles, for he knows.

And free to every sun-warm breeze,
As the winnowed grass, is my soul, my soul,
To the fragrant breeze, the vagrant breeze,
Faint with sweet summer-dole.

There's none to spy but the glimmering sky,
And his lover's heart is so wide, so wide—
Soon in godly mirth he will hold the Earth
In his arms, a dark-tressed bride.

A little bird, can he have heard
What our trembling hearts have sighed, have
sighed,
His wooing song he has stilled so long —
He knows, he knows, my bride . . .

We know a place of crumpled grass
Where we lay together so close, so close,
Where memories stray, as of new-mown hay
The fragrance — and no one knows.

Vibrations

I have drunk the sunset potion
Of that fiery western bowl,
And the heart-beat of creation
Goes a-humming through my soul.

I am dancing with the grasses
To the breeze's time-sweet tune ;
Tremulous as the forest with the
Rain-wind's reminiscent croon.

With the homing bees a-droning
To the calling bluebells' chime ;
Pulsing with the insect-murmur
Of the whirring wheel of time.

With the fire-flies a-throbbing
O'er a pine-walled daisy mead :
Forest organ's Vox Humana,
Giant-fluted, million-keyed.

I am quivering with the ripples
Tumbling diamonds on the shore,
That they gleaned in careless wonder
From the heavens' exhaustless store.

Rolling in the long slow sea-swells,
Like that distant blur of light,
With a cargo of sea-longing
Gliding in the shoreless night.

In a willess glad surrender
Like a perfect violin,
I respond to every tremor
Of the magic voice within.

Till I chime with each elusive
Faint and fainter overtone
Of the universal keynote,
Haunting, echoing, still unknown.

Christmas Eve

After the wonder of Christmas Eve
When I was a little boy,
I took to bed in my jealous arms
My most beloved toy.

And visions of what we were going to do
In the hermit world of my den,
Went to sleep with my hot unwilling eyes,
And waked with my dreams again.

I am no longer a little lad,
And toys have lost their charm ;
Yet every night now is Christmas Eve,
With its dearest gift in my arm.

Fall Exuberance

When the wind through the brown
Withered crowns hisses sharp,
As the weaving waves in Winter
With ice-jewels in their warp . . .

When the sun roams again
Through the breached Summer screen,
And the stored lethargic shadows
Scatters from the forest green . . .

When the leaves on the wind
Are as birds on the wing,
And the silken milkweed bevies
From a dell go wandering . . .

Then my heart starts anew
On the road o'er the hill,
Autumn shriven, Autumn driven,
Wholly given to Autumn's will.

Vapors

On quivering hills a tender haze,
Meek afterthought of fiercest blaze ;
A pearly smile on field and stream,
The wood-birds' answering pensive theme —
A vesper dream. . . .

Shades of our strangled hopes, they rise,
Like films on dream-enchanted eyes,
On the ardent heart a numbing chill,
And the pæans of imperious will
Grow faint and still.

The Tree

Each Spring-tide of new impulse rent
The fibres, lesser passions wove;
Fluted with deepening scars, it strove
Till the long urge of life was spent.

When man the perfect shaft beheld,
Who anguish for each triumph paid,
Its image out of stone he made,
Which his mute aspirations spelled.

The Turn of the Wheel

A flash of reckless frenzy, and a glow
Far prouder than the ever forespent joy
Of fruitful thrift, and like a worn-out toy
A golden hoard Fall scatters at a throw.
But while the world lies hushed and drear, the slow,
Sure Earth has fused it — nought but brown alloy
To wolfish tempests leaving to destroy —
Into another flower-crested flow.

In vain we try to hoard the golden dowers
Of love and thought the quickened moments gave,
The heart must lavish in unstinted showers
Its wealth to swell an ever new-born wave ;
The greedy mind becomes a beggared knave
As sullen 'hind its leering spies it cowers.

I Saw a Russian Thistle Ball

I saw a Russian thistle ball.
It sped on the course of the aimless winds,
In the garish light of December plains,
A nerveless, colorless, worthless thing,
Like a fugitive shape of the pallid sands.

An insolent vagrant, at every shift,
It left the easy prolific germs
Of a vulgar, surly, elbowing brood.

And the dim cross-lights of memory fall
On a hillside dewy with breath of spring,
Where with tenacious fortitude,
Arbutus wrests its thrifty terms
From rocks that hold warm rays in bonds,
From nursing moss and leafy drift.
There its perennial home it finds,
And all the sweets of earth it gathers in its veins.

Precious Stones I Found by the Sea

Precious stones I found by the sea,
Aglitter with magic of sun and spray;
I took them home exultingly
—Were paltry pebbles, dry and gray.

The vesper sun in the maple trees
Fired the torches of rioting Fall;
—I bore a branch with a few faint leaves,
Dusty and sere, to my somber wall.

Songs were urgent in my breast,
As the tide of Spring, as the swell of the sea
—Words obeyed my burning hest,
Bare as stones from the sea.

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